

# Focus on Fleet

Fall 2002

A publication of the SC Budget and Control Board  
General Services Division, Office of State Fleet Management



## From the State Fleet Manager

Ah, Fall! The time of year when a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of...

...football! and Italian Sausage Dogs at the State Fair, of course! What did you think I was going to say?

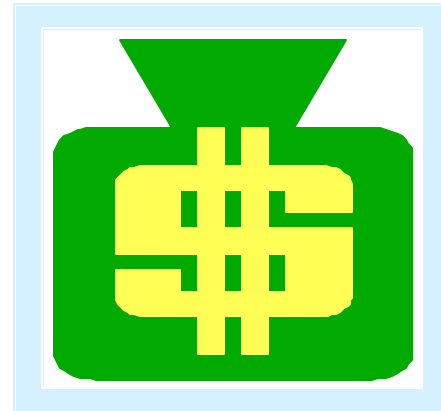
This is my favorite time of year in South Carolina. The weather has begun to mellow a bit, the golf courses are in great shape from the rain, and things are on track here at State Fleet Management for another great year. We are nearing completion of the first phase of the new Fuel Credit Card contract. At this writing our new contractor, Mansfield Oil Company of Gainesville, GA, has completed the conversion of all the State-owned fuel facilities to their control and will soon begin installing the tank gauging equipment needed to bring all those facilities up to the desired standard. Once again we have structured the contract so the State does not have to make any capital investment up front. The equipment upgrades will be a tremendous step forward in managing fuel inventory at these facilities.

The new fuel card will still be a Wright Express Card, but the color has changed from green to red. Drivers should not notice any appreciable difference in service or fuel availability. For those agencies that still wish to use them, we also have proprietary cards available that can be used only at State-owned facilities. Kudos and thanks to Jeff McCormack and Rob Malpass here at State Fleet, and to all the members of the Fuel Card Committee from the other agencies who helped make this whole thing come together.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see an important article about our recommendations on the use of 15-passenger vans, as well as a profile of Buddy Fleming, shop supervisor for the Department of Transportation's Richland County Shop. Of course the bottom line is...

*...Y'all be safe out there!*

—Gerald W. Calk  
State Fleet Manager

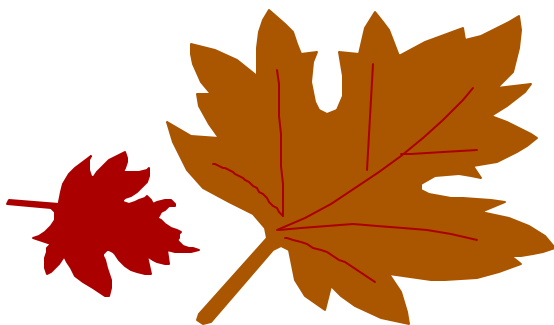


## Save Big Bucks!

Could your agency use a new 2003 vehicle manufactured by General Motors (GM)? Not much money in your budget for purchasing vehicles? Take advantage of the GM Class Action Settlement! Yes, you could be eligible for a \$250.00 credit towards the purchase of a new GM vehicle. Only 106 certificates remain; they will be offered on a first come, first served basis.

State agencies used 247 certificates at a savings of \$247,000.00 towards 2002 vehicle purchases. The certificates were initially worth \$1,000.00, but their value was reduced to \$250.00 in June 2002, where it will remain until 2005.

Call Melissia Stark (803) 737-2041 or Linda Watts at (803) 737-1508 for further details on this money saving opportunity.



## Inside Focus on Fleet:

- Shop Manager Profile: Buddy Fleming, DOT Richland
- Oh Deer! Animal Encounters Danger to Drivers
- SCANA and SCEO Partner to upfit CNG Station
- Bob Bonner Retires

# Shop Manager Profile: Buddy Fleming

**Supervisor at DOT Richland County since 2000; Technician since 1981**

A native Columbian and A.C. Flora alum, Buddy Fleming has worked for the Department of Transportation's Richland County Maintenance Facility since 1981. This married father of two enjoys fishing and hunting, especially deer hunting. In fact, deer hunting seems more and more like a public service when you read the article on page 3 of this issue!

Mr. Fleming worked as a technician in the shop for 19 years before he was made supervisor a couple of years ago. At that time, the previous supervisor had to retire for medical reasons, and Mr. Fleming assumed the responsibilities of the position, then applied for it when the time came, and the rest is history.

The DOT maintains nearly 50 repair and maintenance facilities around the State — at least one in each county — and each shop receives a business plan for the fiscal year. Mr. Fleming says his goal is to perform at least 95 percent of scheduled preventive maintenance, in addition to unscheduled repairs, on the 300 or so vehicles for which he is responsible. To reach this goal he gives highest

priority to the PMs and works the repairs in as time allows.

The Richland County shop, where Mr. Fleming supervises seven technicians and three parts personnel, does almost any repair, up to and including overhauls. Only body work is jobbed out, and that goes to the SCDOT Equipment Depot, which has its own body shop. In fact, recently a tractor was brought in with a broken transmission housing. To do the repair, Mr. Fleming and his staff had to split the transmission into three pieces — "It filled our whole bay," he says.

Mr. Fleming says that the hiring of two additional technicians was a big help; their background and attitude are an asset to the shop.

Buddy makes safety a high priority in his shop. In fact, the shop has an on-site safety rep, and all technicians are required to wear appropriate safety apparel, including steel-toed safety boots.

The DOT places a strong emphasis on environmental issues as well. While an individual might think he could rationalize discarding five

quarts of used motor oil, an industrial-scale user like the DOT absolutely must take proper care at disposal. In addition to the 6,150 quarts of motor oil, Crandall Corporation also picks up mass quantities of used oil filters, antifreeze, Oil-Dri, and other contaminated items. Mr. Fleming also changed to a new kind of washing fluid in his parts vat that is not considered hazardous material.

Budget cuts have forced the delay or cancellation of training in a number of agencies. Unfortunately, Mr. Fleming says training is the most pressing need in his shop. "The world is changing," he says. "We have to keep up."

—Jonathan Eason, Editor

**Note:** Associate Editor  
Margie Valladares wrote the  
questions for this series of interviews.

## Bob Bonner Retires

Bob Bonner, State Fleet Management Employee since 1986, retired at the end of September. Mr. Bonner held several positions at State Fleet, including a long tenure as Executive Manager of the Operations Team.

Mr. Bonner served in the United States Army. As an officer, he served in the Dominican Republic in the 1965 conflict, two "short tours" in Vietnam, and in Thailand and Germany. In Germany he was involved in logistical planning for SACEUR (Supreme Allied Command Europe). He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for his service in Thailand and the Bronze Star for service in Vietnam. He also served in the Alabama National Guard from 1959 to 1965 before entering the Army upon graduation from Auburn University.

In addition to his military service, Mr. Bonner also worked for two years for the Boeing Corporation in Seattle, Washington. State Fleet Management wishes him peace, happiness and good golfing in his retirement.

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## SCANA, SCEO Partner to Upfit CNG Station

On 15 October 2002 control of the Columbia bus system passed from the SCANA corporation to the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority. The takeover had been in the works for nearly ten years as the power company sought to relieve itself of the burden of operating the bus system.

The changing of the guard will have a good effect for the State motor vehicle fleet: as part of the transition, SCANA and the South Carolina Energy Office have partnered to upfit the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) refueling station at the corner of Flora and Assembly Streets in Columbia. The station will serve not only the new CNG buses that make up 25% of the new RTA bus fleet, but also any government-owned CNG vehicle.

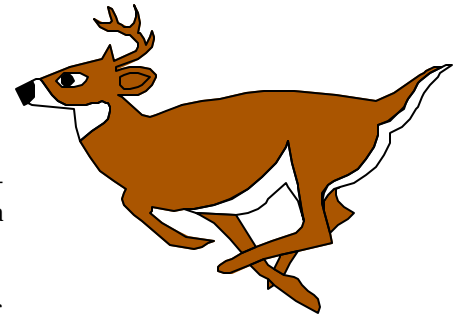
CNG vehicles are much cleaner than diesel engines, releasing 56% less hydrocarbon and NOx emissions; particulate matter from a CNG engine is practically nil.

Under the arrangement, the Energy Office is paying about two thirds of the cost for the upfit of the station, including the new card readers and a new compressor, while SCANA continues to provide the natural gas and operate the station. The redevelopment of the station will make it more practical for State agencies to purchase and use CNG vehicles in the future.

## Oh Deer!

### Animal Encounters too Close for Comfort

If you ask someone to name a dangerous animal, you might hear answers like a crocodile, a bear, a shark, or a mountain lion, but practically no one would mention a deer. After all, we're talking about Bambi's mother here, right? Cute and fuzzy, with that sweet little white tail ...



But if you drive in the country, you might have a different view. In South Carolina alone, accidents involving deer claim two lives a year, on average, and cause several thousand accidents. In 2001, there were 3,326 deer-vehicle collisions (DVCs) in the State, causing some 261 personal injuries (to human beings, that is) and 3 deaths. "You pretty much assume an encounter like that is going to be fatal to the deer," says Charles Ruth of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Ruth gives a few basic rules for avoiding a deer-vehicle collision:

- Be alert, especially in the breeding season (October through December). More than 60% of DVCs occur during this time.
- Deer are most active during the morning and evening twilight.
- If you see a deer in the road ahead of you, blow your horn and (if there is no oncoming traffic) flash your high beams to get the deer's attention. Do not assume the deer sees or hears you.
- If you see a deer on the shoulder of the road, especially if you are very close to it, don't blow the horn or flash your lights: you may spook the deer into the road.
- Finally, if you simply can't avoid the deer safely, take the hit. Sad as it is to kill one of these magnificent beasts, attempts to avoid hitting a deer cause most of the injuries and deaths in deer-vehicle collisions.

Why have deer suddenly become such a traffic hazard? If you ask environmental groups, you will probably hear that it results from mankind's encroachment on deer habitat. However, if you ask hunters, you might hear that restrictive bag limits and other regulations, combined with relatively warm winters, have allowed the deer population to grow unchecked, especially in a State where deer have few natural predators.

The real reasons are a combination of these factors and the abundance of roads and of motor vehicles. Last year Horry County had the highest number of DVCs; while Horry County doesn't have an especially high deer population, it does have a large number of tourists, many of whom have never seen a deer that wasn't hanging on the wall at their local steak house.

If you do have the misfortune to hit a deer, call 911 to report the accident, call your insurance company, and be thankful if you've survived the encounter. But whatever you do, don't call the DNR looking for compensation: after all, the State doesn't own the deer.

## New Fuel Cards Issued

The new Red WEX and Gold Proprietary State of SC Fuel Cards should be in use by all agencies at this time. There has been some confusion as to where to call for assistance if the pump/station should fail to accept the card.

If employees encounter a problem with the acceptance of the Fuel Card while they are at a **Retail Site**, please call the top number listed on the back of the card: **1-800-842-0071**. Most problems can be resolved while the employee is at the site.

If the problem cannot be resolved by the WEX personnel at the first number, the employee should then call the second number listed on the back of the card, the **Mansfield On-Site Customer Service SC Help Desk No.: 1-866-275-7338**. Remember that your driver ID or pin number is always the number 7 and the last five of your Social Security number. Every attempt should be made to pay for the fuel either electronically or by manual authorization before you pay out of pocket.

In the event that these calls fail to resolve any problem, please call Rob Malpass with State Fleet Management at 803-737-1611 as soon as possible.

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## Minibuses are Better

Recently there have been a number of reports about the high rollover potential for fifteen-passenger vans. A report on the television news show *60 Minutes II* highlighted this danger and quoted sources from major American vehicle manufacturers recommending that **no more than ten adults** be transported in these vans, and that they be seated as far forward in the vehicle as possible. In fact, the United States Marine Corps has issued a directive that no more than eight adults be transported in such a van.

Because of these safety concerns, and bottom-line concerns over product liability, at least one major manufacturer has stated that it will stop production of fifteen-passenger vans in the near future.

Readers are probably also aware of Jacob's Law, effective 1 July 2000, which prohibits the transportation of children in fifteen-passenger vans. Schools and daycare providers must comply with this law by July 2006. As an alternative to the vans, children may be transported in 14-passenger minibuses. These minibuses are considerably safer.

Based on these concerns, State Fleet Management is recommending that agencies reexamine their use of fifteen-passenger vans and limit the number of passengers. Agencies might also want to reconsider the applications for which the vans are used.

State Fleet Management has already purchased a few of the more stable fourteen-passenger minibuses and is phasing them into the lease fleet to replace the fifteen-passenger vans. We have also established a **Van Driver's Safety Course** to provide hands-on training to users of these vans. We hope to reduce the use of fifteen-passenger vans as much as possible and avoid any injury or death from van accidents.

For information on the purchase of minibuses, visit the Materials Management Office website at

<http://www.state.sc.us/mmo/mmo/>

The Materials Management Office has posted the State Contracts issued to several vendors on its website. State Fleet Management is adding minibuses to its fleet and encourages other agencies to do the same. The safer the fleet, the better for everyone.

### In the Winter 2003 Focus on Fleet:

- New look, new functions for SFM website
- Introduction to SCEMIS non-license plated equipment management
- Stories and pictures from SCGFMA conference
- Transportation accidents no. 1 cause of on-the-job deaths